

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Sun River Wildlife Management Area-Montana FWP Management

Proposed Implementation Date: January, 2014

Proponent: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

P.O. Box 200701
1420 East 6th Ave.
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Location:

T21N-R8W Section 2; E2SW4
T21N-R8W Section 8; SW4NW4
T21N-R8W Section 9; NE4NE4
T21N-R8W Section 10; SW4NW4
T21N-R8W Section 11; E2NW4, NE4SW4, SE4SE4,
T21N-R8W Section 12; S2SW4, NW4SW4
T21N-R8W Section 13; NW4NW4, SW4NE4, S2SW4
T21N-R8W Section 14; NE4NE4, SW4NE4, SE4NW4, N2SE4, SE4NW4
T21N-R8W Section 15; S2SW4
T21N-R8W Section 16; ALL
T21N-R8W Section 17; SE4NW4, W2SE4, NE4SW4
T21N-R8W Section 21; NE4NW4, NE4
T21N-R8W Section 22; NE4NW4, W2NE4
T21N-R8W Section 23; S2
T21N-R8W Section 26; E2E2, SW4SE4, SE4SW4
T21N-R8W Section 35; N2NE4
T21N-R8W Section 36; LOTS 1-7 INC., NW4SE4, N2SW4, W2NE4, NW4 LESS 5 AC SPECIAL LEASE IN LOT 7 (SE4SE4)

County: Lewis and Clark County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

This checklist EA is for the use of various school trust land for the purpose of bird monitoring and surveying. The goal of the program is to provide density estimates for approximately 200 species of birds and track population trends at a regional scale. Points of interest are across the state on a combination of school trust land, other state land, and private land. This observational research is to be done on foot, resulting in minimal to no impact.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

No scoping was done for this project because there are no impacts anticipated.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

No other permits required for the proposed activity.

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

No Action Alternative- Do not proceed with authorizing the use of the trust lands for wildlife management.

Action Alternative- Proceed with authorizing the use of the trust lands for wildlife management.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i>

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.

Implementation of the No Action Alternative would result in no negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts on the vegetation cover quantity or quality.

Implementation of the Action Alternative will have impacts to the vegetation cover identical to the activities authorized under the previous grazing lease.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Implementation of the No Action Alternative would result in no negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts on terrestrial, avian and aquatic life.

Implementation of the Action Alternative will have impacts to the terrestrial, avian and aquatic life identical to the activities authorized under the previous grazing lease for the purpose of elk winter range and other wildlife management activities.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i>

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The No Action Alternative should result in no direct or indirect impacts.

The Action Alternative will result in the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks having the authority to restrict access and hunting as it deems appropriate to the wildlife management goals of the Sun River WMA.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed project activities will not change the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks activities on the aforementioned state trust land which have been on-going for some time as a grazing lease. Neither the Action Alternative nor the No Action Alternative should result in any direct or indirect impacts.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The Licensee (FWP) agrees to pay in advance, an annual fee of \$17, 026.75 due 30 days after the execution of the LUL. The fee shall increase 2% annually and is due March 1st each year thereafter (per FWP/DNRC 2004 MOU). The annual rental rate shall be:

Year	Rate
2012	\$17,026.75
2013	\$17,367.29
2014	\$17,714.63
2015	\$18,068.92
2016	\$18,430.30
2017	\$18,798.91

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Andy Burgoyne	Date: January 10, 2014
	Title: Helena Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the Action Alternative.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐ EIS

 ☐ More Detailed EA

 ☐ No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Hoyt Richards
	Title: CLO Area Manager
Signature: /s/	
Date: 3-11- 14	